

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT NIACT IMMEDIATE

USUN NEW YORK NIACT IMMEDIATE 605

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7787

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SS, SP, MO, AL, MA, UN

SUBJ: SPANISH SAHARA: MOROCCAN COMMUNICATION TO GOS

1. I HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM FOREIGN OFFICE WHERE I HAD BEEN SUMMONED BY UNDER SECRETARY ROVIRA ON CORTINA'S INSTRUCTIONS. CORTINA HIMSELF WAS THEN MEETING IN ZARZUELA PALACE WITH PRINCE AND WITH PRIME MINISTER.

2. ROVIRA SAID THAT CORTINA HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO PASS ON TO ME THE FOLLOWING. AT APPROXIMATELY 7:15 EVENING, NOVEMBER 6, THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR IN RABAT HAD TELEPHONED THAT HE HAD JUST FINISHED A MEETING WITH MINISTER BENHIMA WHO IS THE ONLY MOROCCAN MINISTER IN RABAT AND WHO IS COORDINATING THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIVITIES THERE. BENHIMA HAD MADE WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS AN "UNOFFICIAL" COMMUNICATION WITH THE REQUEST THAT IT BE CONVEYED TO THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT. THE COMMUNICATION WAS AS FOLLOWS:
(A) MARCH WILL CONTINUE ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, UNLESS THERE IS A CLEAR INDICATION THAT A NEW ROUND OF CONVERSATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE BETWEEN MOROCCO AND SPAIN.
(B) THE PREVIOUS AGREEMENT FOR THE MARCH TO STOP IN NO-MAN'S LAND (APPROXIMATELY 10 KILOMETERS) HAD LOST ITS
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VALUE BECAUSE OF THE PUBLICITY WHICH SPANISH GOVERNMENT

HAS GIVEN IT.

(C) UNLESS THERE IS A CLEAR POSSIBILITY OF A DIALOGUE, THE MARCH MUST CONTINUE. THE PROBLEM FOR MOROCCO IS THAT IF IF STOPPED WITHOUT PROMISE OF A DIALOGUE, THE MARCH WILL BE TURNED AGAINST RABAT.

(D) FROM THE FIRST MOMENT, MOROCCO HAS CONSIDERED NEGATIVELY THE POSSIBILITY OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN MOROCCAN AND SPANISH ARMIES. IF THERE IS NO PREVIOUS AGREEMENT TO AVOID CONFRONTATION, MOROCCO ESTIMATES CASULTIES WOULD BE ABOUT 30,000.

(E) IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO AVOID INTERVENTION OF ROYAL MOROCCAN FORCES. IN SUCH EVENT, THE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD BECOME BELIGERENTS.

(F) UN INTERVENTION IS TO BE DISCARDED COMPLETELY AND MOROCCO WILL NOT CONSIDER ANY PLAN WITHIN THE UN FRAMEWORK, INCLUDING WALDHEIM'S PROPOSAL.

(G) MOROCCO ADMITS THAT SOME FRIEND, SUCH AS JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA OR FRANCE, COULD MEDIATE WITH ALL NECESSARY URGENCY. FRANCE HAS REMAINED QUIET UNTIL NOW IN ORDER TO BE AVAILABLE AT THE LAST MINUTE TO REQUEST MOROCCO TO STOP THE MARCH, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY FOR 24 HOURS, SO THAT BOTH SIDES COULD RECONSIDER POSSIBILITY OF A SOLUTION.

(H) EARLIER TODAY, MOROCCO HAD THOUGHT OF SENDING AL JATRI (SAHARAN LEADER RECENTLY DEFECTED TO MOROCCO) AND SEVERAL OTHER SAHARANS TO MADRID TO PRESENT SAHARAN VIEWPOINT AND TO DETERMINE WHETHER THROUGH THIS CHANNEL A SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND. MOROCCO WAS STILL DISPOSED TO SEND THIS GROUP TO MADRID IMMEDIATELY IF GOS THOUGHT USEFUL.

(I) IF SPANISH GOVERNMENT WAS NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE ABOVE PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATION, THEN ONLY THING MOROCCO COULD DO WAS TO DO ITS BEST TO PROTECT SPANISH COMMUNITY AND PROPERTIES IN MOROCCO FROM MOB ACTION.

(3) THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR IN HIS COMMENT TO FOREIGN OFFICE SAID THAT IF ABOVE SITUATION DEVELOPED NOVEMBER 7, BREAK IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WOULD BE INEVITABLE AND HE ASKED FOR INSTRUCTIONS AS TO WHICH COUN-
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TRY WOULD REPRESENT SPANISH INTERESTS. AMBASSADOR ADDED THAT HE AND BENHIMA AGREED TO MEET LATER THIS EVENING AND THAT IN THE MEANWHILE BENHIMA WOULD REPORT TO KING HASSAN.

(4) ROVIRA SAID THAT CORTINA WISHED US TO KNOW THAT IN SPITE OF MOROCCAN THREATS, POSITION OF SPANISH GOVERNMENT REMAINS AS BEFORE. THAT POSITION IS THAT THE SUB-

STANCE OF THE QUESTION OF THE SAHARA'S FUTURE MUST BE SETTLED IN THE UN FRAMEWORK. IF THE MOROCCANS CONTINUE THEIR MARCH, SPAIN AS THE ADMINISTERING POWER WILL USE ALL MEANS AT ITS DISPOSAL, INCLUDING ARMED FORCE, TO PROTECT THE TERRITORY.

5. ROVIRA ADDED THAT THE SPANISH UNREP HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO USE ABOVE INFORMATION WITH SECURITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT OR IN THE SESSION IF HE WERE ALLOWED TO SPEAK.

6. I TOLD ROVIRA THAT I WOULD PASS THIS ALL ON IMMEDIATELY TO THE DEPARTMENT. HOWEVER, I ASKED HIM WHAT HE MADE OF BENHIMA'S REFERENCE TO THIS COMMUNICATION AS AN "UNOFFICIAL" ONE. ROVIRA SAID THIS HAD, OF COURSE, BEEN NOTED, BUT SPANISH GOVERNMENT DID NOT BELIEVE IT COULD IGNORE THE COMMUNICATION.

7. I ALSO STRESSED TO ROVIRA THAT IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED IN THE SECOND ENCOUNTER BETWEEN BENHIMA AND SPANISH AMBASSADOR SINCE THIS MIGHT ALTER THE SCENARIO. BY THE TIME I LEFT THE FOREIGN OFFICE AT 11:30 P.M., THERE STILL HAD BEEN NO REPORT ON A SECOND MEETING, BUT ROVIRA PROMISED THAT HE WOULD LET ME KNOW.

8. ROVIRA SAID THAT AS FAR AS HE KNEW, GOS WAS NOT CONTEMPLATING FRENCH MEDIATION.

9. COMMENT: ROVIRA DID NOT ASK US TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT ABOVE AND ADMITS THAT BENHIMA COMMUNICATION MAY BE ANOTHER PIECE IN WAR OF NERVES TO GET SPANISH BACK TO BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS. OBVIOUSLY, SPANISH WOULD PREFER NOT TO USE THEIR ARMED FORCES, BUT I THINK IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE NECESSARILY TO ASSUME THEY WILL NOT.
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